

ARMS FREEZE:

Who Is For
and
Who Is Against



The word “freeze” has firmly established itself in the international political lexicon. And this is quite understandable, as the idea of a freeze of armed forces and armaments is closely linked with the central problem of today—that of disarmament.

The need to freeze military potentials, nuclear potentials first and foremost, is dictated by common sense itself. In order to begin genuine disarmament, it is necessary to prevent a new upswing in the arms race, which threatens to make the world less stable and more fragile and to make much more difficult the drawing up of international arms limitation accords. The possibility of getting the process of genuine disarmament under way by means of a freeze of armed forces and armaments as a first step stems from the ~~existing~~ **balance of nuclear forces and the overall approximate military-strategic parity between the USSR and the USA, as well as between the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO,** which was made clear at the 38th Session of the UN General Assembly.

The USSR's Constructive Approach

The early 1980s witnessed powerful antiwar movements in the USA, Western Europe and the world over. They showed dramatically the extent of the world public's alarm over the mounting threat of nuclear war and the catastrophic consequences of a new upswing in the arms race, launched by the US Administration. It is highly significant that, regardless of their political affiliation and social status, many peace campaigners feel that **in order to improve the international situation it is essential first of all to freeze nuclear arms at their present level.** It would be no exaggeration to say that this demand has become one of the main demands of the antiwar movement. Other proposals, including those about the establishment of nuclear-free zones in the north of Europe and in the Balkans, have clearly the same aims.

In the early 1980s the Soviet Union made the pioneering step of proposing a qualitative and quantitative freeze on Soviet and American nuclear arsenals.

Thus, in 1981 the 26th CPSU Congress proposed "coming to terms that already now a moratorium should be imposed on the deployment in Europe of new medium-range nuclear-missile weapons of the NATO countries and the Soviet Union, that is, freezing the existing quantitative and qualitative level of these weapons, naturally including the US forward-based nuclear weapons in this region."

In order to facilitate an equitable agreement on a major reduction of nuclear weapons by the two sides in Europe, on March 16, 1982, the Soviet leadership unilaterally declared a

moratorium on the deployment of medium-range nuclear weapons in the European part of the USSR. Weapons already stationed were frozen quantitatively and qualitatively, and the process of replacing the SS-4 and SS-5 missiles by the more advanced SS-20s was halted*.

On May 18, 1982, the Soviet Union announced its preparedness to impose a quantitative freeze on American and Soviet strategic weapons and maximal restrictions on their modernization.

In June 1983, in accordance with an instruction of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the Soviet government proposed to the governments of the USA, Great Britain, France, and China that a qualitative and quantitative freeze of nuclear weapons be imposed by the nuclear weapon states.

In October 1983 the Soviet Union submitted to the 38th Session of the UN General Assembly as an urgent and important item on the agenda a proposal on freezing nuclear weapons. In an accompanying letter to UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuellar, Andrei Gromyko, first Deputy Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs, said: ***"The Soviet Union proceeds from the fact that one of the most urgent tasks today is to end the nuclear arms buildup, to stop the new upswing in the arms race, which the world is being drawn into ever more rapidly. Implementation of this task would be a major contribution to reducing the threat of nuclear war now facing the peoples."***

In a resolution adopted by the 38th UN General Assembly session on the initiative of the Soviet Union it is proposed that all nuclear states stop the buildup of all components of their nuclear arsenals, including all means of delivery and all types of nuclear warheads, refrain from the deployment of

* This moratorium was in effect until the United States actually started deploying the Pershing-2 and cruise missiles on the European continent. While renouncing its unilateral commitments in this sphere the Soviet Union at the same time declared that they would again enter into effect if the USA and the other NATO countries show a readiness to return to the status quo prior to the deployment of the medium-range American missiles in Europe.

new type of nuclear weapons, institute a moratorium on all tests of nuclear weapons and their new means of delivery, and discontinue the production of fissionable materials to be used in nuclear weapons.

Taking into account the fact that the nuclear potentials of states are unequal and that two countries possess the biggest nuclear arsenals, the resolution provides for a simultaneous bilateral freeze of nuclear arms by the USSR and the USA as a first step and as an example for other nuclear-weapon states to follow. The latter are expected to freeze their own nuclear arms as soon as possible. This is the gist of the resolution.

The Soviet Union's adherence to the idea of an arms freeze was reiterated on March 2, 1984, by Konstantin Chernenko, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, in his speech at a meeting with voters of the Kuibyshev district in Moscow. He said:

"Curbing the nuclear arms race is, of course, of key significance for peace and international security. The USSR's stand on this issue is clear. We are against rivalry in the buildup of nuclear arsenals. We have been and remain in favour of the prohibition and destruction of all types of these weapons. We have long since tabled our relevant proposals, both at the UN and the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, but the United States and its allies are blocking their discussion."

Why Washington Doesn't Agree to a Freeze

A nuclear freeze would open up favourable prospects for creating a healthier political climate in the world. However, this idea should not be allowed to be distorted by warmongers who still hope either to emasculate it or to make it serve their own interests.

It is common knowledge that in the 1960s the USA put forward a proposal to freeze certain components of nuclear arsenals, but in doing so it pursued goals which had nothing in common with a desire to secure peace on earth. On September 22, 1960, President Eisenhower said that the United States was prepared, on the basis of reciprocity with the USSR, to shut down one major facility producing fissionable materials after another under international inspection and verification. At the UN Commission on Disarmament the USA also proposed that the USA and the USSR should each place 30 tons of weapons-grade fissionable material under international inspection. However, it was not disclosed what amount of fissionable material the USA was going to keep at its disposal. It was obvious that the implementation of that proposal would not have reduced the nuclear war threat because this remaining amount was clearly substantial.

The Soviet Union stressed at the time that it would have been a different matter altogether if the USA agreed to discuss the question of eliminating existing stockpiles and a ban on nuclear weapons simultaneously with stopping the production of fissionable materials. Since it was clear that the USA was not ready to do so, this meant that its proposal was a propaganda ploy designed to perpetuate US superiority in the number of nuclear warheads and to place the whole of the Soviet Union's nuclear industry under US control.

In the 1960s the United States tried hard to preserve its superiority in nuclear weapons, to stop or at least slow down the growth of the Soviet Union's nuclear-missile potential. With this in mind, in January 1964 President Johnson put forward a proposal about a "controlled freeze" of strategic nuclear-weapon delivery vehicles.

A detailed plan of such a controlled freeze was submitted to the Committee of 18 on Disarmament by a special US representative on August 27, 1964: What the proposal amounted to was the United States' desire to find out the exact nature of the Soviet strategic nuclear weapons, their deployment, and the scale and character of the Soviet missile industry, as well as to try and slow down the production and modernization of such weapons by the Soviet Union. The intent of the proposal was thus patently clear: to "freeze" further progress of the USSR in the deployment of strategic nuclear-weapon delivery vehicles and to impose strict control over the USSR's activities in this sphere.

Past experience shows that the United States put forward nuclear-freeze proposals only when it wanted to secure its superiority in certain components of military arsenals and to block off those channels in weapons development which would have enabled the Soviet Union to achieve parity in the corresponding types of weapons. At the same time the USA has never put forward or supported the idea of a comprehensive nuclear freeze. What is more, when military and strategic parity was achieved between the USSR and the USA, the US leadership subjected this idea to especially fierce attack.

An example of this is provided by the April 18, 1982, statement of the US Department of State. In it the idea of a comprehensive nuclear freeze is roundly condemned. For example, it is said that a nuclear freeze at the existing levels would perpetuate the military inferiority and vulnerability of the United States and its allies (despite the military-strategic parity between the USSR and the USA, and between the Warsaw Treaty Organization and NATO, admitted by many prominent political and military leaders, some of them in the United States itself), would thwart efforts to reach agreement on substantial reductions of the two sides' nuclear arsenals and arouse serious doubts about America's leading role in the NATO alliance, and so on. Steering a course toward heightening international tensions, the US Administration has stepped up its propaganda campaign against a nuclear freeze. The newspaper *Newsday* (October 19, 1982) carried an article by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger in which he assured the readers that a

freeze would not reduce the possibility of war. It would run counter to the first and primary objective of arms control, he said, because it would leave the USA and its allies in a position of permanent military inferiority. This, he went on, would undermine the deterrent which has kept the peace.

At a subsequent press conference the Pentagon chief asserted that the adoption of a resolution on the freeze would lead to a greater threat of war and this would cause the Russians to stay away from the negotiating table. The US Secretary of Defense also touched upon the problem of verifying the nuclear freeze. He stressed that the Soviet Union had never agreed to on-site inspection and that in the case of a complete freeze verification could be effected only on the condition that it would be possible as a minimum requirement to carry out inspection on the spot, that is, a very thorough verification in the country itself.

In contrast to the US conception of verification as an end in itself, isolated from the freeze, the Soviet Union has been consistently advocating verification as a means of enforcing the observance of agreements in this field. This, in the USSR's view, is the sole purpose of control. In Soviet proposals verification is regarded as being inseparably linked with the process of disarmament. It cannot and must not play an independent and overriding role, while its extent, forms and methods must be determined by the nature and volume of disarmament measures.

Without underestimating the importance of verification, the Soviet Union nevertheless believes that it should play a subordinate role in relation to a nuclear freeze. Therefore, verification can only be a part of a freeze agreement, serving as an instrument contributing to its implementation.

The Soviet Union considers that verification should be effected primarily with the help of national technical means. These might also be used for effective control of the countries' commitments under the freeze. However, the USSR is prepared to discuss certain additional measures to be agreed upon through negotiations with the participants in a nuclear freeze. It is quite possible to resolve this

problem on the basis of cooperation. This means that Weinberger's "arguments" against the freeze are completely groundless.

Addressing in March 1983 the annual conference of the national evangelical association in Orlando, Florida, the US President rejected the idea of any negotiations with Moscow aimed at attaining an early nuclear freeze. The US Administration also turned down the Soviet government's proposal of June 1983.

Thus, the White House's stand on the nuclear freeze is entirely clear. It is part and parcel of the US militarist policies aimed at attaining military supremacy over the USSR. A freeze would preserve the existing rough parity between the Soviet and American nuclear arms; that is why it does not suit the US leadership which, despite its recent, increasingly frequent claims that it seeks dialogue with the USSR, is still staking on military confrontation with the socialist world.

Politically Isolated

The Political Declaration of the Warsaw Treaty Member States, adopted on January 5, 1983, at their meeting in Prague, points out that **a vast majority of states and an increasingly representative cross-section of the world public support a freeze on nuclear arsenals.**

Indeed, at the 38th Session of the UN General Assembly, as at the previous one, such countries as India, Mexico and Sweden submitted draft resolutions on freezing nuclear weapons. For example, India proposed calling on all nuclear states to agree to a freeze which among other things would provide for a simultaneous complete cessation of further production of nuclear weapons and a complete halt to the production of fissionable materials for weapons manufacture.

Mexico and Sweden tabled a draft resolution calling for a nuclear freeze, addressed first and foremost to the USSR and the USA as the ~~two~~ biggest nuclear-weapon states whose example would be followed by other nuclear-weapon states. It is proposed that the freeze should be announced simultaneously in two unilateral declarations or in a joint declaration. The resolution's preamble expresses the belief that the existing conditions are most favourable for such a freeze since the USSR and the USA have at present equal nuclear might and, as it seems obvious, there is an approximate parity between them.

The discussion of these draft resolutions convincingly exposed the absurdity of US arguments against a freeze, according to which such a measure is allegedly an obstacle to disarmament talks. As Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere justly noted in his speech at the session, a nuclear freeze would be the basis for successful, serious

disarmament talks, inasmuch as at present new weapons are produced more quickly than agreement on control of old weapons is reached. The way to an all-encompassing programme in the disarmament sphere, stressed M. Qionibaravi, the representative of Fiji, should begin with a nuclear freeze. It is our belief that a nuclear freeze would constitute not only a major step in the disarmament process, but would also create favourable conditions for conducting such negotiations as the START talks in a spirit of good will and mutual trust, he said.

The 38th Session of the UN General Assembly clearly demonstrated that in spite of differences in approach, the nuclear freeze idea is shared by a majority of states. Only the USA and its NATO allies, which found themselves in political isolation, voted against the freeze resolutions.

The World Public Says "Yes"

However, the US leadership is finding it increasingly difficult to pursue an obstructionistic policy on the question of a nuclear freeze. This is largely due to the fact that a **powerful antiwar movement has emerged in the USA, with its central demand being a halt to the nuclear arms buildup.** The movement is a nationwide one, representing virtually all age groups, social strata, political groups and religious trends. Its participants are united by a profound conviction that urgent measures to curb the arms race are needed, as well as by an awareness of the dangers inherent in the US foreign policy designed to achieve military-strategic superiority over the USSR.

The movement already has a history of its own. In April 1980 Randall Forsberg, Director of the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies in Brookline (Mass.), issued a memorandum calling for the freezing of American and Soviet nuclear arsenals. A year later Washington was the venue of a national conference of peace forces which brought together representatives of tens of public organizations with a membership of several million. The conference approved an Appeal for an End to the Nuclear Arms Race which stressed the need for the immediate conclusion of a Soviet-American agreement in this field. At the same time the National Campaign to Freeze Nuclear Arms, a coalition movement, was set up with the aim of coordinating the activities of all peace forces in the country.

The nuclear freeze movement grew rapidly. According to public opinion polls its aims are supported by more than 70 per cent of Americans.

The impact of mass antiwar actions which swept the country and the resolutions of state legislatures in favour of the freeze was felt on Capitol Hill. At first a small group of legislators cautiously voiced support for the freeze

being dangerous and contrary to US interests, adding that the movement was organized by those who would like to see America weakened.

The idea of a nuclear freeze has taken root worldwide. It is noteworthy that in the United States more and more people, both prominent politicians and rank-and-file Americans, are coming to support the idea. Senator Gary Hart, a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the 1984 Presidential elections, Senator John Glenn (Democrat) and others have expressed themselves in favour of a freeze. Senator Cranston, for instance, observed that the vast majority of the people, in contrast to their leaders, continue to see an acute need for an end to the arms race. This view is best borne out by the impressive demonstrations in support of a nuclear freeze, which took place on October 1, 1983, in 200 cities and towns at a time when the White House continued to whip up the anti-Soviet hysteria.

The situation is very similar in Europe. Towards the end of September 1983, 300 prominent British scientists called for a nuclear freeze. A decision was taken at a congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany last November, which contained an appeal to the USA and the USSR "to begin at an agreed-upon time a controlled freeze of the testing and deploying, and then of the production of nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles".

Neither has the nuclear freeze movement on both sides of the Atlantic subsided in the least after the USA and NATO started the deployment of new American missiles on the European continent. Proof of this is the setting up in the USA last December of a new national antiwar organization: Electors in Support of a Freeze—1984. The primary task of the new organization is to draw American peace advocates into the election campaign in the country, to put the problem of curbing the arms race, freezing nuclear arsenals and averting a thermonuclear catastrophe in the focus of this campaign.

The West European public is resolutely coming out against the new round of the arms race being launched by the USA

and NATO. Demanding an immediate end to the deployment of Pershing-2 and cruise missiles there, it is also calling for urgent measures to freeze nuclear arsenals. The scope of this struggle is steadily growing.

In today's world the proposal for a nuclear freeze has become a sort of a litmus paper with the help of which one can accurately identify the proponents and the opponents of the arms race.

The Soviet Union's attitude to the nuclear freeze movement is set forth in the statement of the Soviet delegation at the 2nd Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament of June 15, 1982: "In search of measures that could effectively put an end to the arms race many politicians and public figures of different countries have turned lately to the idea of a freeze—an end to the further buildup of nuclear potentials. Although there are differences in views on the subject, on the whole they seem to be in the right direction. We regard them as a reflection of the profound concern of the peoples about their fate. Figuratively speaking, the peoples have cast their votes in favour of preserving the most precious thing in the world—human life".

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ЗАМОРАЖИВАНИЕ: КТО ЗА И КТО ПРОТИВ

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The peaceful assurances of the US government would be much more credible if it accepted the proposal mutually to freeze American and Soviet nuclear arms. So much weaponry has already been accumulated that this step would not create the slightest threat to the security of either side. But it would considerably improve the general political atmosphere, and, one would assume, make it easier to reach agreement on a reduction of nuclear arsenals.

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